THE NEW BLACK PRESENCE IN BRITAIN

A CHRISTIAN SCRUTINY

**A statement by
British Council of Churches' Working Party
on Britain as a Multi-Racial Society**

Preface

The reader, who is accustomed to reports in the British Churches, will be surprised by the style of this pamphlet. It is not a judicious report on a controversial subject, but an invitation to Whites to engage with angry and alienated Blacks – to see ourselves as others see us.

Nor is it a lonely witness to what is happening. The YMCA recently published their own report, *Just in Time?*, on the same theme. A series of articles in the evangelical magazine *Crusade*, about a black person's experience in our society and our churches, agrees in detail with what the working party has found. The Roman Catholic Church has also recently published a critical examination of the racial composition of its schools: *Where Creed and Colour Matter* (published by the National Catholic Commission for Racial Justice).

What are we to do with material like this? The Assembly of the British Council of Churches agreed unanimously to publish and commend it. The Council expects that it will startle local congregations into seeking out the Blacks in our towns and cities to test the truth of what we read. Then, the Council hopes that the Archbishops' Call to the Nation about 'what kind of society we want' and 'what sort of people we must become' will take on new meaning, driving us to a more profound search for answers.

The members of the Working Party are ready to travel and to advise. The Council recommends that smaller meetings, conferences and consultations, *with blacks present*, should be arranged before the pamphlet is discussed in our all-too-white synods and assemblies.

I do not enjoy reading this document. I disagree with Gus John's prognosis about our society. But I recognise that the challenge of the black presence will not go away. A rational and imaginative response is needed urgently throughout British society. That is why this pamphlet matters.

Harry Morton
General Secretary

April 1976

1

Resolution of the 4th Assembly of the British Council of Churches, 6 April 1976

The following resolution was passed unanimously

The Assembly of the British Council of Churches

receives the document on 'The New Black Presence in Britain: A Christian Scrutiny', from the Working Party which has produced it;

expresses its gratitude to the Working Party for a stimulating paper which demands careful reflection by Christians;

urges member Churches to encourage their departments, committees, local congregations and members to use this opportunity to listen to an expression of the black experience in our society;

accepts the challenge which it presents to us and to our understanding of, and obedience to, the Christian Faith;

asks the Division of Community Affairs to bring recommendations to the Assembly for dealing with implications arising from the document;

gives approval to its publication by the Community and Race Relations Unit;

requests the Division of Community Affairs to authorise the Working Party to undertake further studies in relation to Britain as a multi-racial society.

Introduction

by The Rt. Rev. David Sheppard
Bishop of Liverpool

Text of his speech introducing the report to the BCC Assembly

'From where I stand . . . ' writes Gus John, in his contribution to *The New Black Presence*. He does not express himself temperately, calmly, about what it feels like to be black in Britain. He speaks sharply, aggressively, as do many black people whom I know. He speaks from where he stands; and we hear from where we stand.

So many attitudes depend on the angle from which you see and experience life. Our home used to be in a side street off the Old Kent Road in South-East London Frequently, when I went out in the car, I had to get into the traffic of the main road. I sat there powerless, fuming at the selfishness of the drivers in the main stream of traffic. When I eventually got into that main stream, I would then notice the most irresponsible drivers trying to edge their way out of side-streets into the main road. I was suitably indignant at their lack of caution. My attitudes are heavily conditioned by where I stand or sit. This document is a serious challenge to us to try to stand where black people stand and to try to understand how they feel. It deserves that we should make the effort to share in the experience which the working party has tried to communicate to us. This is an unusual report. It's not very detached or cool. But we have had all sorts of reports, telling us in cold statistics about the blocks in the way for black people, when it comes to jobs or schools or housing. They haven't altered many people's attitudes, unless they have entered into some experience which the statistics backed up. This report is right to say, 'For real change to happen, the emotional temperature is as significant as any systematic analysis'.

There needs to be a deep change of heart, a repentance, among white British Christians. From where we stand, we're tolerant people, trying to help everyone regardless of colour or creed. From where we stand, we blame people who could have achieved well if they had worked hard. Or if not that, we blame the parents. A head teacher said to a black community worker that the mother of a teenage girl they both knew just didn't care. As it happened that very morning the mother had been in the community worker's office, saying, 'I can't cope'. 'I can't cope' is often covered up so that we interpret it as 'she doesn't care'. I'm reminded of an Educational Psychologist telling me that he is frequently sent for by a school, because he is told that there is a disturbed child in the school. He says that he always tells himself he doesn't know if there's a disturbed child; but he does know that there's a disturbing child. Often what he does is to ask the teacher to watch the child, and try to tell him a month later three surprises he's noticed about him. Often the change in the teachers attitude is the change that was needed.

We white British speak about the problems of black people in Britain. I wish we would try to notice instead the potential they could bring to our society–

3

perhaps try to notice three surprises. Teachers, out of false sympathy as well as out of prejudice, are tempted to look at the problems of black young people rather than their potential. We must stop thinking as though black people were disturbed. They may be disturbing. But that should make us ask at least as many questions about white society as about black. **I go along with the view that black people have not brought problems to Britain, but have revealed the problems our society already had. So we mustn't say 'We have no problem of race in Southport or Cheltenham': attitudes there have a great deal to do with opportunities which are offered or denied at work or in schools.**

So my first plea in receiving this document is that we should think less about problems and more about potential.

Secondly, we should listen to the authentic voice of black people which this document brings to us. We will have to accept that the voice is likely to be an angry one. We still have to go on listening, listening very carefully, if we are to interpret the experience of black people accurately.

This generation of British-born black people faces in many ways the greatest experience of alienation of any generation anywhere. Their parents have a nostalgic dream of the West Indies; they cannot have that. Nor can their parents share the British school experience which they've had. In their eyes white-run society offers only one place for them, and that is at the bottom of the heap. Many refuse to do the jobs which their parents have accepted.

My third plea is that we really should acknowledge the scale of disadvantage which black people face. For instance, in 1974, PEP made a survey on the extent of Racial Discrimination. In their tests they sent people out in pairs; one was always white and English, the other was sometimes an Italian, sometimes a Greek, sometimes a West Indian or an Indian or a Pakistani. The level of discrimination against Italians or Greeks was comparatively low. It was not so much a matter of whether they spoke good English – as is often claimed – as of their colour. PEP concluded that Asians and West Indians applying for unskilled jobs faced discrimination in 46% of cases – just about half.

I've been told that discrimination against black people is no different from the way southerners might be treated in Yorkshire or Lancashire. That is wholly untrue. In the first place you will find southerners who are managers, head teachers, chief executives – and bishops – in the North. But even if there were only a few of them, the fact would not be visible. What is plainly visible is that black people are absent from the front ranks of almost every walk of life. This absence sets off its own chain reactions. Many black people have assumed they could never make it and have settled for jobs far below their ability. School children draw their own conclusions and decide, often by the age of 13, that there is no point in working hard.

Liverpool has in the past been quoted as being a good example of how different racial groups can settle down if only people wouldn't make such a fuss about race relations. We have very few immigrants, because employment has not been good enough for years to attract new settlement. Liverpool black people have very largely been born and bred here. Coming back in the train after a weekend conference in Brixton between black and white church leaders, I found

4

myself thinking 'We don't have this sort of issue in Liverpool': I was falling into the trap many white people in Liverpool drop into. You don't see any large number of black people in the city centre. A number moved to new estates. But many of those, having received an unfriendly welcome, have moved back to Liverpool 8. An employment agency in Liverpool 8 told me recently that they have to try to encourage some black young people to lift their sights to the possibility of having a job, knowing that they are following two generations who have been without jobs. Until more recent stirrings, black people in Liverpool largely resigned themselves to being at the bottom of the pile.

I showed this document to a Roman Catholic priest who has lived in the heart of Liverpool 8 for some years, and asked him if it rang true to his experience. Here are some of his comments: 'This report completely rings true for me . . . We must get down to an examination of the colonial conscience . . . I honestly do not think that Liverpool knows or understands the problem facing it . . . We need the willingness to listen . . . I wonder whether one could launch a listening campaign for the whole Church . . . Ministry to me has been a highly *giving* type of exercise and life. I am sure this is necessary. But the *receiving* factor is fundamental in society for the church at the present time. And I am not really convinced that this quality is present. It means giving a lot of status away, and having done with a great deal of superficial respect from others. For I believe that the only message we will get back for a period of time is, 'Get lost'. How far we are willing to break through such a discouraging encounter, I don't know. This is particularly so on the Liverpool scene. For the problem (and the potential) has been there for so long and ignored that we cannot expect a sudden positive response.'

My fourth point is that we should argue consistently for the principle of positive discrimination and practise it whenever it is within our power to do so. People, including Church-members, sometimes grumble to me about situations in which they feel that discrimination is made in favour of black people. If it is sometimes the case, we should not apologize for it, but explain why it is necessary. Underlying this is a debate about justice. We talk a great deal about justice without making plain what we mean by the word. I want to argue that there is a distinctively Biblical view of righteousness, justice. It is not the same as fairness. It is not epitomised by the blind-eyed Goddess of Justice. She properly stands over the Law Courts. She does not look to see if you or I have greater needs; she is blind. She disperses even-handed justice. But, in the Bible, the righteousness of God is not blind: the living God has His eyes wide open: He is active on behalf of those in special need. He sees the needs of the widows, the orphans, the foreigners, the oppressed, and He acts on their behalf. And this, at times, is in contrast with strict justice. The righteousness of God, as shown in the work of Jesus Christ, is not the righteousness of the kind of law which gives to each man according to his deserts; it is the righteousness of divine grace. When we argue for positive discrimination in favour of groups in the greatest need, other groups will grumble that it's not fair. They want the even-handed justice of the blind Goddess. This becomes very plain in times of economic cut-back: cuts 'across the board' appear to be fair. But such cuts deny any concept of priority of needs.

If we are to reflect the character of the living, eyes-wide-open, God, we should argue unashamedly for policies which will spend much more money, give much more resources, to those inner-city areas where black people largely live.

Where positive discrimination lies within our power, as churches we should be quick to want to reflect this part of the character of the living God. This will mean offering facilities like use of church halls and churches, and partnership whenever it is wanted to black churches. The suggestions made in Appendix 1 of some possibilities for action may bring anxious responses about finance. But if we're serious about positive discrimination, we should take seriously suggestions such as these regarding pioneer schemes in the field of education: I don't know how we could do it, but I hear with seriousness the Working Party's challenge: the Church should deliberately intervene in the educational structures in order to compensate for, not to confirm, existing educational privilege and imbalance.

We have talked a good deal in recent months about what kind of society we want. A careful look at the black experience in Britain may tell us more than we wanted to find out about the society from which many of us benefit. Too often we've assumed that people who don't 'make it' are the grit which clogs the machine, rather than people with real needs who are being damaged by a machine which needs changing. We are accused of being divisive by stressing the need of a particular group. But I am clear that the next stage in race relations has to be offering much greater resources and opportunities for each to develop its own distinctive culture and life. When a group feels sufficient confidence and strength they should bring their contribution to the whole of society.

At present we hear two voices from groups who are at a disadvantage: one voice says 'Leave us alone, our culture's as good as your's'. The other says 'Give us a share of a common future'. The voices are in conflict. The conflict reveals something of the hurt which groups feel when they know that they are shut out from the opportunities a society claims to offer to all. The sense of national unity we long for lies on the far side of tackling this issue. As Christians we must ask whether our ideals are not still too individualistic, concerned with me and my family, when the Bible challenges us to a much more corporate view of life. This is the question which is raised so sharply on page 24, **'Is it possible for a British type of society to exist except as a heap with a group of people at the bottom? Is it possible to be so interested in success, without a group of failures who can make success credible?'**

The New Black Presence in Britain: A Christian Scrutiny

A statement by
The British Council of Churches'
Working Party on Britain
as a Multi-Racial Society

'Those Blacks.' 'The immigrant problem.' 'The Race issue.' 'The black threat.' The headlines, the slogans, are familiar; and they produce familiar responses among people of the most common political outlooks; either 'Send them back home,' or 'Be nice to them,' or 'Problem? No problem, I can't see what the fuss is all about.' We believe that there are indeed problems, but that these slogans and responses all miss the real point. *The basic issue is not a problem caused by black people: the basic issue concerns the nature of British society as a whole, and features of that society which have been there long before the recent phase of black immigration.* The black communities are the groups which have been most recently exposed to the demands of the British way of life, and they are exposing features of that way of life which may be painful to recognise. In certain very revealing ways, they are holding a mirror to British society, in which members of that society can see themselves. The urgent question, therefore, is not 'What shall we do about the black problem?' but 'What is British Society like?' and 'What sort of Britain do we want?' If you are interested in *that* kind of question, we suggest that you watch and listen to the black communities: they will give you an alarmingly good starting-point.

That, very briefly, is the considered view of a group of us who have been called together by the British Council of Churches and who have, over the past two years, been trying to make some assessment of what has been happening in the field of race relations in this country. We were asked to examine the response of our society, and particularly of the British churches, to the 'new black presence'. By this we mean the communities of African, Asian and Caribbean origin that have been developing in this country since 1948. We agreed to the BCC's request because we each felt that this was an urgent and demanding matter which made a claim on our time and attention. But we are not a professional group of race relations specialists. As individuals, some of us do indeed work in this field, but many others do not. We are writing this document not because we want to maintain a professional role, nor because the BCC expects us to show some results of our activities. We are writing because we ourselves feel we must. We feel obliged to tell our fellow Christians and fellow citizens about what we have seen and heard. So we are not offering a 'Report' in the usual sense of that term; we have not supplied detailed statistics or analysis, although we do indicate in

Appendix 3 and in our supplementary material where such resources can be found. But what we are giving is not so much a report as a testimony. We are not a team of experts trying to enlighten the ignorant; we are a group of ordinary people trying to communicate an experience, an experience for which a report of the more usual kind would be inadequate.

Our own experience

We have started our document by stating the basic conclusion to which our experience has led us. It is a conclusion which we do all agree on, and the rest of our document is offered as development of this main theme. At this point, we wish to stress that we ourselves are a very diverse group of people. We would not go so far as to claim that we are completely representative of the British population, but we are certainly varied enough, in race, nationality, class and general attitude, to have plenty of difference and plenty of disagreement amongst us. Our Chairman and Convener has been Gus John, a native of Grenada who has been living in Britain for the last eleven years, and we have other members of Caribbean and Asian origin. Our group also includes people of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish ancestry, some of whom have spent long periods overseas in Africa. (Details about the membership and programme of the Working Party are given in Appendix 2.) With such diversity, we have experienced plenty of disagreement and mutual critisicm within the group; we have had to spend time attacking and scrutinising statements from each other which have appeared to some of us to be partisan or emotional or irresponsible or plain wrong. Also we have not accepted with uncritical credulity all the stories and attitudes that we have heard, as we have listened for many hours to young black people and parents, black social workers and activists and ordinary citizens. So we hope that we have avoided being carried away by half-truths or by seductive jargon. Our self-criticism at this point has been greatly helped by meetings in various parts of the country at which we have discussed earlier forms of our statement with local church representatives. At the same time, we would be betraying the groups of black people who have been willing to spend so much time with us, and who have trusted us with their stories and their feelings – and we would be betraying the kind of truth that they have been sharing with us – if we offered a paper consisting only of cool dispassionate objectivity. For real change to happen, the emotional temperature is as significant as any systematic analysis. To dilute the cry of anger so that it ceases to be personal and particular and becomes just a generalisation or a statistic, would be for us to betray our experience and to deprive our readers of the responsibility for forming their own judgement about our testimony. Faced with cries of agony and anger such as we quote on page 15, we sometimes get the response 'We've heard it all before'. If our main conclusion is true, namely that the new black presence is revealing traditional characteristics of British society in a new way, then this response is not surprising. Actually, we would wish to insist that there are unique and novel features in the situation since the new black presence came into being, features which haven't been perceived before. We kept on returning to this kind of question in our working party; there was continual tension between those who

wanted to stress the special character of the black experience and those who saw it as part of a longer historical series. But even if people can truly state that they have heard it all before, such a claim cannot properly be used as a refuge or an excuse. It must surely lead on to the question, 'In that case, why does the complaint continue to be heard? Why hasn't the wrong been put right?'. When we quote some of the complaints which we have heard, we have not started with a blind assumption that they are all true, or that all blacks are right and all whites are wrong; we have all been sharply critical of some of these statements and of some of their authors. Nor do we want to encourage the self-indulgent fatuity of confessing other people's sins. But we cannot escape the conviction that the agony and the anger are real; they are evidence not merely of some people's stupidity or ill-will, but of something seriously wrong in British society, something of which all members of this society are victims in some degree.

Our document reflects the fact that we spent most time considering specifically the situation of the West Indian communities, and particularly of young people born in Britain of West Indian descent. The problems are most sharply identified in that group's experience; indeed our observations have led us to believe that this category of young people is the single most threatened group in Great Britain today. However, we have taken care to check our impressions with Asian groups also. Our conclusion at this point is that, although there are very important differences between Asians and West Indians, and these differences deeply affect the ways in which these groups approach British society, British society has given to both of them much the same kind of reception, and therefore their experience of British society has been similar. We think that the differences between Asian and West Indian will decrease, with the Asians tending to share the experience of the West Indians rather than vice-versa. Adult Asian representatives have expressed their fear of this tendency – not a fear based on dislike of West Indians as such, but a fear based on the visibly destructive and alienated mood among so many young West Indians.

A Historical Background
The presence of black people in Britain is not new. The British people have a long history of involvement with African and Asian people through slavery, colonisation, trade and mission. Many British servicemen have been posted to areas in Africa and Asia and have returned home with the image of black people as 'the natives': in other cases, war service brought black men and white men together in equality of status, skill and responsibility. Some British cities, particularly the major ports, had accommodated multi-racial and polyglot populations for several generations. By the end of the 1940's, British whites had a considerable heritage of experiences, stereotypes, images and prejudices concerning black people.

The main period of mid-century black immigration is usually dated from 1948. To help solve its post-war labour shortage, Britain looked to its ex-colonies, where labour was cheap. Just over one million people left their homes in the West Indies, Africa and Asia, and arrived in British cities, mainly in the slums. They took jobs sweeping streets, collecting tickets, driving buses and trains,

cleaning and maintaining the institutions of the expanding health service. For several years there was relatively little concern about them, either in the churches or in society as a whole. Some white people saw that a problem was developing, and various voluntary organisations were set up. Many of the individuals involved were primarily committed to opposing injustice in South Africa, which was still a Commonwealth territory, and saw the concern for black people arriving in Britain as an implication of their struggle against apartheid. It seemed obvious that if apartheid was wrong, then integration was right, and this became a goal for 'men of goodwill'. Most people felt that if there was a problem at all, it was one which would sort itself out within a generation, through the assimilating effects of the educational process. They probably also felt that one could always rely on an indefinable British ability to see things through, along with a heritage of tolerance, justice and equality. A country which had the courage, vision and idealism to establish the Welfare State so recently, could surely cope with the problem of accepting black immigrants – who would be a very small group in percentage terms. As the pace of immigration accelerated, however, some people became alarmed, and the demand became heard, 'Send them home'. A series of Acts of Parliament was passed in the late sixties and early seventies, to reduce the flow of immigrants; at the same time statutory bodies were established to cope with 'race problems' in large cities. The earlier mood of optimism and complacency was disappearing.

Most British people, however, including most churchgoers, felt that these were distant matters of no immediate relevance. This probably remains true today. Assimilation hasn't happened. The black population is not evenly distributed throughout the country, but is mainly concentrated in certain areas of some very large urban centres – areas, incidentally, where most church institutions have been numerically weak. Those of us in our working group who do not live in such areas have found ourselves asking, 'Which is the real world, our home town or the places like Brixton?'. We could perhaps abandon our responsibility and leave the matter to our big-city colleagues, if it were not for the main conviction which has been borne in upon us, namely that the problem is a problem of society as a whole. When we look again at the more conventional and 'normal' areas, we see the same fundamental problems there also.

The Black Experience of Britain

Introducing Gus John

Our Chairman, Gus John, is exceptionally well-placed to transmit and to interpret the experience of black people in Britain today. Particularly, he is in close touch with the situation of young people of West Indian parentage in a wide range of our major cities. So our working party asked him to contribute a major section of our statement. We believe that his contribution, based as it is on a combination of sharp individual experience and reflective analysis, will be a truer representation of our working party's experience than a document consisting only of generalisations. It is a particularly well positioned window into a scene which is concealed from most members of the British population. The following paragraphs are little more than an introduction to his contribution: we commend to our readers' attention the longer statement from Gus which is available as a supplementary essay to our document. In it he not only develops his own analysis at greater length, but he also offers a wider range of other resources and authorities.[1]

Gus John's contribution

A pronounced and almost cynical lack of attention to history on the part of white society has accounted for a situation where black people in Britain today are being regarded as if they are aliens from another planet suddenly transported to a society which has had no experience of a black presence before and bears no responsibility for their troublesome presence now. Everyone, including the churches, seems to have forgotten the fact that sizeable populations of black people have existed in this island from 1500 to the present day, and that the way this society dealt with them accounts in great measure for the manner in which the black presence today is regarded. Everyone seems to forget that the West Indian as we know him today is a creation of Western capitalist countries, Spain, France, Britain, and of the Gospel that accompanied their exploits. The true West Indian, the Arawak and the Carib, had to give way to this new social being.

The race debate in this country is carried out as if the presence of black people here bears no relevance to the responsibilities of Britain and the rest of the capitalist world in the social and economic affairs of their countries of origin. That link is assumed to be broken at Heathrow or Southampton, and people are presumed to be in a completely new parochial relationship with British society. But, accepting the boundaries prescribed by this insular view, let us examine what this relationship is between black people and society.

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[1] Available on request from the Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches. To be published in June 1976.

The nature of the continuous relationship could be assessed by the fact that a highly industrialised technological society like Britain, with proven expertise in managing the territories of millions of people against their will, with the ability and unscrupulousness to spend £1000 million on 'Concorde', could recruit two million people from its reserve labour pool in the third world and not give a damn for their social, psychological, cultural and economic welfare in this country. This says many things, the most important of which are the following:

1. *Britain saw black immigrants as little more than second-class production factors; as labour stock whose yield could be maximised, given the social circumstances they would encounter . . . higher rents, higher HP, in fact the privilege of being black entitled you to work longer hours and pay more for everything.*
2. *Because of the society's attitude to and way of seeing black people, it was felt that it was quite acceptable to consign them to urban areas already disintegrating with decay, and rumbling with the conflict generated by dispossessed groups aspiring towards a more humane way of life. Black people were lumped, lock, stock and barrel with the white working class. The society then turned round and blamed the Blacks for the urban decay and for the results of social inaction and unplanned urban growth on the part of successive Governments.*
3. *Refusing to come to terms with its own history and to accept that it was essentially a racist society, Britain laid its increasing social problems – most of which were a function of the racialist nature of the society – at the door of 'the alien wedge'.*

Liberal opinion as well as the white working class (who rather than see Blacks as allies saw them as an alien threat) demanded that Blacks be controlled. By the beginning of the sixties, haze of empire had receded, the boom was well nigh over and the economy was turning away from labour-intensive production. If the Blacks could not be 'sent back' they must at least be 'controlled', hence the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, which, in addition to stemming the immigrant tide, ushered in the era of institutional racism. Racial exploitation would continue in the hands of free market forces, but the State had given its 'imprimatur'.

The middle sixties saw Britain in even greater economic trouble. Recession had set in and a reserve pool of black labour was building up for which the country could find no use. Further cuts in the labour intake was an obvious first step and if it was a Labour Government that had to take it, it would refute the allegation of racism by simultaneously instituting the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (later to become the Community Relations Commission).

Immigration had by now come of age as an election issue and as the concern of liberals and socialists as well as fascists. The question still remained, what to do with the pool of reserve labour already in the country. They, at least, could be manipulated and controlled, and could provide justification for policies regarding others of their kind who want to come in. One can almost hear echoes of statements like: our duty now is to concentrate on settling those immigrants already here.

Therefore . . . more repressive legislation concerning immigration, more political statements to make those here feel insecure, and a firmer lead to those Whites who go all out to remind the Blacks that they don't belong here anyway. But it was not only ethnocentric Whites who were concerned to keep Britain tidy by keeping it lily-white. The police took their lead from Government and from the current political consensus too, and began, wherever black people were, to do 'boundary policing' and by their actions to prove to black people that they did not belong and had no rights.

One of the criticisms black people level against the institutional machinery in the Race Relations field is its inability to engage meaningfully with situations in which black people are suffering the effects of institutional racism. This is particularly true of, for example, the Community Relations Commission. Such a body should, in effect, be much more engaged in advocacy on behalf of black groups than it has so far allowed itself to be. Why is such advocacy necessary?

If one were to examine institutional structures in this country and how they relate to black people, one would find disturbing evidence of malpractice, of racism, of black people being included out, and of procedures and policies which render black young people and adults quite vulnerable. This is reflected in institutions along the whole spectrum from education, housing, social services, etc., careers opportunities, to black people within the police force and in the British Armed Forces.

For some time now, some magistrates have been expressing concern about the number of black juveniles and young adults appearing before them, the nature of their alleged offences and the nature of the police evidence. Those youth leaders, black community workers and others in a position to represent young people in Court themselves comment on the increase in numbers, the regularity with which they seem to have to appear, and the unsatisfactory manner in which provisions are made for those young people by the Courts and by the Social Services.

Social Services Departments in inner cities up and down the country dutifully exercise their rights and execute the law as provided in the 1969 Children & Young Persons' Act and the 1975 Children's Act. But for many, the syndrome of referral, court appearances, Care Orders, search for adequate placement, which have become necessary for more and more young black people, is overstretching their services.

On the one hand you have social workers encouraging young West Indians and young Asians to defy their parents and their norms and to invoke the sanctions of police and Courts when parents violate their rights – particularly in respect of physical punishment, and on the other hand you have community homes and foster homes refusing to accept young black people. Many homes operate a quota system. Others 'will not touch' young black people who appear from their case histories to have aggressive or uncooperative tendencies. This results in large numbers of young people being sent to punitive custodial institutions when the reason for their being in care does not warrant that type of provision,.

From where I stand, working with twelve youth and community work projects, all concerned with black people in twelve inner-city areas, I find the system's method of coping with the situation of young black people quite horrifying.

The police rightly claim that they have a job of work to do, and presumably that job takes on new dimensions with every new batch of black school-leavers who join the ranks of the unemployed. We have long arrived at a situation in which it is necessary for schools to teach young people, formally and seriously, not only how to survive on the dole but also how to survive in the 'nick'; in other words, education for unemployment and education for incarceration.

Largely because successive Governments in the sixties set up and expanded a special hunk of state machinery to deal with the problem of coloured immigrants, responses to certain situations by black groups have tended to be dependent on support from the Community Relations Commission and from the Urban Programme. Ideally, quite a number of projects initiated by local groups in response to a specific situation, e.g., a hostel for homeless young black people, a young unmarried mothers' project, an adult education programme for hard core young offenders who are asking for an opportunity to use their abilities to contribute to the growth of the community, should be seen as demonstration projects which the local authority recognises as a possible way of responding to those specific needs, and incorporates into its programmes.

By now someone will be arguing that the local authority cannot be expected to take on board and continue to offer every whimsical provision that local minority groups might dream up. Maybe not. However, the damaging effects of having and encouraging a free-for-all, with black groups destroying one another in an effort to extract money from the CRC and the Urban Programme, cannot be underestimated.

No number of hostels for homeless young Blacks, whether funded by the CRC or Urban Aid, can detract from the urgency with which local authorities need to re-consider their policies relating to housing of single individuals, particularly young males. It is not uncommon to hear young black girls being advised by their peers that the surest way to solve their accommodation problems is to have a baby, two preferably. Given the scale of the situation we are describing, no amount of 'project-hatching' (hostels, unmarried mothers' projects, drop-in centres), could justify a lack of concerted attention to the implications of this phenomenon. Furthermore, it could be argued that many such projects are unjustifiably costly, and are diversionary.

What have we now? It is perfectly obvious to those who have eyes to see that society has dashed the hopes of black people who came with a sense of belonging to this society, ready to serve it, and gave this service often at the expense of their children. Those same adults look now with utter despair at those young people who are the fruit of the encounter between them (the incoming group) and white society. To extend the analogy somewhat, it is indeed a spoilt, tarnished fruit with a blight that will eat at the very core of society. Let us hear, for instance, from interviews with some young black people in Brixton:

> *'The first generation (of black people) that came over – they brainwashed them. The times have changed now. The things my mother and father tell me – they have been through so much. I am not going to work at a place for*

14

40 years and not having anything to show for it. After 40 years they just have a little watch. And one man owns a house and he alone lives there and the house is so big with all 200 rooms and I have to walk the streets. That's not right because if a house has 200 rooms that means that 200 of us can stay there.'

'They find that we black people have started to use our brains to get us out of the pickle which the white man put us in, that is why they try all this project business. They start that from when you are at school from when you are 5. They stream you and put you in the lowest stream, choose about two black guys in each year and put them in the A stream just to make it look good, then they put all the other black guys in the low stream. They don't want black guys to stay on at school but if you do manage to stay on they think of some thing to get you out of school or they start making life hard for you – so you start making life hard for them – then they kick you out – that's what happened to me because I was alright until I was in the 6th form, then they started making life hard for me so I said I was going to do the same thing to them. One day this man, my house master, wanted to cane me . . . You know this man said, 'Bend over, let me cane you'. Not me. I was not bending over to be caned so he said to go home and don't come back so I said 'fair enough' and since that time I never went back to school.'

'I left school four years ago. When I went to primary school in this country I was first in the class but when you go to secondary school it's different. You don't get the same vibes the white kids get and so you move into a black crowd and stick with that crowd, because you feel safe and secure. You rebel when the teachers say 'come here, boy,' and you just tell them to go away and you kind of lose interest in school. I didn't do too well in school.'

'The project can be a good thing but they still make it so that it is an advantage to them. They must see something coming that's why they give the money. They build up things like the West Indian youths have a whole heap of problems. We got no more problems than what they have. Because they have the same problems too. They want black people to work on the underground and do certain jobs. They don't want to see black people driving round in Rolls Royces. They make it sound that the West Indian youths have a whole heap of problems. Which problem we have that they don't have? It's problems that they put on us.'

'Don't tell me about social security. You go and sign and they say your money is coming on Wednesday or Thursday and on Friday your money still ain't come. You say to them, 'Listen, I don't want to steal, I don't want to rob, I am trying to get a job, I can't get a job, all I want is some money to exist and to look for a job.' Yet they still muck you around until you get in a state where you want to assault them and that's bad. But they have no respect for you. You walk down the street, you are an ordinary person but once you step into the social security office you are not that person anymore. The person behind the counter treats you as if you are just a layabout, a tramp, someone

*you don't have to have manners to, someone whom you don't say, 'Can I help
you, sir,' or whatever. They just ask what you want, come at such a time,
don't do this, don't do that, where do you live, who is your girl, how many kids
you got, how many dogs you got, what do you eat, where is your doctor –
and you get fed up, man. And this is why a lot of guys don't bother to sign on.
They would rather just hustle, not that they enjoy stealing money, but the
state wants you to work and they tell you the best way is to sign on and while
signing on they will get you a job, and it's nothing like that. It's totally
different and you just say, 'Well, fuck it, man' and you go and start hustling
and you are independent again and everyone wants to be independent.'*
(*Quoted from 'Race Today'. April 1975 – 'The Black Youth speak'.*)

*Against this kind of background how does one relate to the concept of integration?
Given the experiences of black people in Britain to date, given the manner in which
institutional racism plays havoc with people's lives, granted society's inability to
look at how it is mirrored in the experience of its black population, let alone
accept what it sees and what that experience tells us, is it surprising that black
people treat Community Relations and the idea of harmonious community living
with pronounced cynicism? To wish to integrate with that which alienates and
destroys you, rendering you less than a person, is madness. To accept the challenge
to join it and change it from within, when it refuses to accept that you are there in
your fullness and refuses to acknowledge the results of the interaction between you
and it, is double madness.*

*I am arguing that the sense of purpose and destiny black people in this island
must have is the eventual liberation of the black peoples of the world, the liberation
of the Third World from poverty, oppression, dependence, dehumanisation and
bondage to oppressive power-structures and multi-national corporations.*

*It is supremely ironical that, having appropriated to itself an unfair share of the
world's resources, having denuded the 'under-developed' world of its natural
resources, and its opportunities for growth and self-sufficiency, Britain could turn
to those same territories and say: Come and be employed as cheap-labour in
England rather than unemployed cheap-labour in Asia and the West Indies. Now
that you lack the capacity to produce riches for me on your own soil, come to the
metropolis and enable me to maintain and improve the standard of living there that
your toil here had enabled me to achieve. It is a monumental con-trick, and one at
which so far British capitalism has had a great measure of success.*

*How could it be that West Indian men and women, many of whom were them-
selves sugar-cane workers, complain bitterly at having to pay 30p for a 2-lb bag of
Tate & Lyle sugar and 20p for a pound of bananas, and threaten to strike them off
their shopping lists, rather than remove from their baskets some of the peculiar
unnecessary goods which this nation's advertising makes them believe they need?
Where is the continuity in the meaning of their experience of having been sugar-
cane workers and their present experience as buyers in a British supermarket or
corner-shop? How could it be that Ribena finds a market in the West Indies when
vitamin 'C' in the shape of all kinds of citrus fruit gets kicked about by village kids
in most islands of the West Indies? How many tons of sugar must Guyana sell to*

16

Britain before it could purchase a tractor? What does the £1 the black person here sends to dependents in Asia or the West Indies enable them to buy?

We cannot, with the British working class, be concerned about higher standards of living and a greater share of the wealth our labour creates, without having regard to the under-development of the Third World and the retardation of generations of our own relatives which this inevitably entails. When white people disavow responsibility for the sins of their fathers, and when the working-class (particularly) argues that they were just as oppressed as the colonial Blacks and did not benefit by the exploits of the capitalists, they fail to realise that even prior to 1948 the poorest white person in Britain was richer than the poor person who was being robbed and exploited in the Third World.

Against this background, and in the light of the totality of our experience and not just the British experience, community relations as the race relations industry defines it is not just a luxury but a downright humbug. We, as black people, need to realise the dangers facing us as a racial minority in this country and take action to confront our condition. This we cannot do if we continue to expend our energy within irrelevant programmes which only serve to confuse the real issues facing us, and at the same time enable the oppressive system to continue the pretence that there is a genuine concern about our situation as a racially oppressed minority.

In a polarised race situation such as we have in Britain, we need to be aware that our struggle for justice and for social change does not and cannot include a perspective which suggests that by improving social and economic conditions for society as a whole, the position of black people would necessarily and automatically be altered. This is a society with its values all mixed up and abysmally wrong. It needs a sense of direction which will help its members to see what the purpose of their lives is and what they are attempting to do with them; to see where society is going and what the relationship between man and man should be. It transmits a bankrupt decadent set of values which, alas, the poor, the downtrodden, the most rejected and unjustly treated learn to assimilate. Yet it is among the poor and wretched and abandoned that the Christian Gospel was given its meaning. It is with them therefore that the Church should identify and among them that it should be visible, so that being at one in that inter-action some direction could be given to society as to how to formulate aims, how to determine who we all are, and, in that knowledge, where we must go.

For us, as black people, the choice is clear. Even if the Church, encapsulated as it is within the oppressive culture so that it cannot stand with the poor and oppressed, refuses to proclaim the Gospel of deliverance that Christ preached (Luke 4:18), and accept the mission that the Gospel enjoins, a mission which poses the Church as a contradiction to the status quo, we as black people could do no other than identify with the struggles for liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world.

We cannot therefore allow white society to dictate the terms of analysis of our situation in Britain, nor give the prescriptions. So long as we continue to latch on to the remedies white society prescribes for us we shall continue to enhance our own destruction, for I can think of few occasions in which Britain has done something in response to the black situation which was not dictated by self-interest and geared ultimately to saving itself.

Assessment and Response

This is the material which Gus John has contributed. What does it say to us? The others of us in our working party had to face this question, and we ask readers to face it with us. Many will feel it carries a sharpness which wounds and angers – a sharpness which it may be tempting to write off as a distortion of the truth. However, we found that the factual basis is too clearly established for us to be able to dismiss it in this way. Nor could we reject it as being part of a subtle mechanism devised by men of ill-will: the sources and evidences of this anger and disorder are too varied and too chaotic for this interpretation to be credible. We would certainly admit that there are many voices among black people, and they have many different messages. They are not unanimous. Some black people would disagree sharply with some of what we have quoted. Some would indeed feel threatened by it, because they have managed to make a prosperous adjustment to the British scene. Many black parents would insist that no solution is possible without the imposition of much firmer discipline in schools. None the less, we must put this fact on record: we have met with several groups in various places, and have consulted them about our document in earlier stages – groups of people chosen by local churches, not by us: white people in these groups have had many various opinions about our findings and black people also have not been unanimous; but all the black people whom we have consulted have admitted that our quotations are true. They tell us that this sort of thing is indeed being felt and being said and being done, and we would be failing in our duty if we did not report it.

If we attempt to summarise the disorder within the black communities in Britain, we find that we identify at least the following elements:

1. Large numbers of potentially creative young people defined, labelled and stigmatised by being condemned to spend years in ESN schools, and emerging finally to incur the disrespect and rejection of society as opposed to being allowed to earn a wage.

2. Even larger numbers emerging each year as semi-literate school-leavers doomed to exist on the fringe of society.

3. Young people without roots and without hope, often unemployed and homeless, gradually drifting into a life of crime.

4. Conflict between these young people and the police force and the other control agencies, with a high proportion being removed from society into custodial institutions.

5. Parents incurring humiliation and blame, for not caring for their children or for dealing with them too harshly, losing all hope and self-confidence and creating further problems for the social services.

6. The coopting of potential leaders into organisations that are intended to control discontent and to do ambulance welfare work, so that they are not available to engage more radically with the structures of society which are based on exploitation and which create the casualties in the first place.

7. The white working class clamouring in some sections for repatriation and denial of citizenship to black people, and in other sections expecting black people to join them in alliance without taking upon themselves any concern for the black people's own claims: black people working harmoniously alongside white people on the factory floor, but being excluded from joining them after work in working men's clubs.[1]

To us, the most alarming element in this situation is the picture which we have been given by young black people. Their parents came to this country with hope, but these British-born second generation blacks have no hope. Many of them are standing out against society and confronting it with violent and criminal behaviour. On its side, white society is locking these young deviants away in various kinds of custodial institutions. We are in danger of losing a whole generation of youngsters to institutional care – prisons, borstals, psychiatric units or ESN centres. In their eyes, society offers only one place to them, and that is at the bottom of the heap, doing the jobs that their parents are doing, which they reject as 'shit-work'. So they leave home and live on the streets and take what they want from the society which has refused them a fully human place, and the police, the protectors of the social order, are in open confrontation with them. The battle lines are drawn and in the clubs where black youngsters gather to play their music there is a sense of solidarity and comfort and territorial right where police who dare to invade are liable to physical attack. 'They want to stop our sound,' the youngsters cry as complaints of noise, of drugs, of protection of young criminals grow in relation to these clubs. The alarming thing is that the rest of society does not hear what the sound is saying, and reckons it only as something threatening and alien and hostile.

As we have already stressed, we have come to believe that the main cause for all this disorder is not the arrival of black people but something more deeply rooted in the nature of British society. The maladjustment of black people is indeed a problem; we are suggesting that there are tendencies within British society to which no humane being (and certainly no Christian) ought to be easily adjusted, and that perhaps the greater problem is the lack of maladjustment on the part of the majority of the population. We must acknowledge that this is bound to seem offensive to many of the mainstream groups in British society. But we want to make it clear that we are not trying to conduct a witch-hunt. We believe that we must attempt, however inadequately, to make some diagnosis, but that is very different from ascribing moral blame. A great deal of the offence is unintended and unconscious, caused almost without any awareness. That is not to say that it is morally neutral, like a taste for marmalade – once people are truly alerted to it they can never be the same again; but we are not trying to

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[1] For more detailed exposition of these 7 elements, see especially sections 3a and 3b of Gus John's supplementary paper. See also Appendix 3.

accuse one particular group (e.g. the English middle-class) of a unique degree of moral culpability.

Our reflections

So we consider some of the points at which the black experience relates to certain aspects of British awareness; for instance the British people's past, their present, their institutions, and their ideas about themselves and their world. (*In this document, we refer to the British as 'they' and 'them'; this is not because we wish to detach ourselves from the rest of the population and sit in judgement – although some of our members are far more identified than others with the mainstream British community. Our only reason for referring to the British in this way is in order that we may, without confusion, reserve words like 'we' and 'us' to refer to ourselves as a working party.*)

The British inheritance from the past

The British have a rich and well documented history. The stories of all peoples reflect pride in their achievements; history is inevitably selective and partial. Now the accepted understanding of colonial history is being challenged by those who were on the receiving end of it. The West Indian in Britain is a product of British history, the creation of the slave trade and the plantation. This is one reason why the British have a particular responsibility concerning West Indians, and why the attitudes of West Indians may cause the greatest sense of alarm. Whereas the Pakistani state was created by the will of its members, who thus were asserting a centuries-old identity and culture, the present population-group of the West Indies was brought into being to serve the commercial ambitions of Western Europe. A slave is a person whose value is determined entirely by someone else, and West Indians were produced to be slaves. Abolition and emancipation set slaves free; but the reinstatement of these displaced Africans to full human rights within society has never taken place. Now their voices are raised on their own behalf asking questions about British colonial history and missionary activity. One simple example of the kind of issues raised by the new black presence is in the teaching of history in schools; stories of India and Africa told through English eyes no longer make sense in a multi-racial class-room. The kind of revolution in thinking and understanding that this demands is well illustrated by the following true story. An education official was talking to a group of teachers about the need for books on West Indian and Asian topics to supplement the school library stocks; he was upset and disturbed by a challenge from a black man present that this was inadequate. 'What is needed,' he said, 'is to go through all the books already there and take out those which distort and dehumanise the image and experience of blacks'.

In the same way, the traditional style of missionary story is seen to be a distortion of the truth in a world where we can no longer work on a 'we-they' basis. Many missionaries have for years been concerned about the disparity between their experience overseas and the expectation in church groups to whom they spoke while on leave. The general church constituency has been slow to learn the

realities of a changing world, where assumptions about the innate superiority of British Christian culture are no longer unchallenged.[1]

Britain in the present world

Jargon phrases like 'neo-colonialism' often fall on deaf ears. But it is none the less true that Britain is part of a rich, powerful Western industrial bloc which derives much of its wealth from the poorest areas of the world. Asia and Africa are hungry, under-developed, lacking medical facilities, historically at a disadvantage in world markets – but increasingly feeling that to wait on aid or UN plans is to wait for ever. The Arabs have led the way, and others will not be slow to learn the lesson that they have bargaining power in relation to their raw materials. The failure of western leaders to spell out to the public the realities of the relationship between the West and the poorer areas of the world, is a lack of moral leadership that will have to be paid for in the days ahead. The fallacy that 'our' booming economies will result in 'their' slow rise to or above subsistence level is now exploded. Relationship with the West results in a duplication of western patterns – with a wealthy privileged elite and an increasingly deprived poor.

Black people migrated partly to escape from the poverty and deprivation of their own country and also to participate in the wealth which their past had helped to create for this country. Most, no doubt, came for motives of individual self-interest – just like thousands of Britons who have gone to seek their fortunes in the other continents of the world. But whereas white migrants usually get to the top of society when they go to the black man's world, Blacks usually stay at the bottom of society in the white man's world. In several parts of Britain, they occupy a position at the bottom level of the working class, living in the poorest areas and working for the lowest rewards. They have the further grievance, in many cases, that they reckon themselves to have been positively brought here by British interests, responding to the promise of participating in British wealth and productivity; and this promise, they believe, has not been fulfilled. They have had more mobility than many British working-class people; but the use of this mobility (with all its anxieties and disruption of relationships) has not really been worth the cost and the effort; yet they cannot now put the clock back; they are here and they have too many links, too much involvement, to belong effectively in, for example, the West Indies. This dilemma is, strictly, insoluble, and deeply frustrating. Many black people, both immigrants and their children, have shared with us their deep uncertainty about their answer to the question, 'Who am I?' 'How should we encourage our children to see themselves – as Jamaicans, West Indians, Blacks, or British, or what? Whose definition do we accept, and why?'

Add to all this the fact that these people are *black*. They are instantly identifiable as being different from the majority of the population. They are not only different in colour, but their colour is the colour of those whose oppression at the hands of Whites is the most advertised human scandal in the modern world. Even the most selfish and individualistic black man must sometimes be aware

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[1] For a more extended account of this historical viewpoint, see section 2 of Gus John's supplementary essay.

that his colour links him with the oppressed black community throughout the world, and that he is now their representative in a white man's environment. Although there are many ways in which black people in Britain share in the experience of other disadvantaged groups, there are these important ways in which their experience is unique. As they realise their solidarity in misery, they will take encouragement from the success of some of the poorer areas of the world overseas, and will begin to compel British society to give what it has so far withheld. Those who refuse to receive their future will find it being forced upon them.

British institutions

Black people experience many British institutions as excluding and impenetrable. The Church has been an example of this. West Indian Christians, nurtured in the Christian faith, believing in Britain as the motherland, home of that faith from which white missionaries came to instruct them, had a rude shock on arrival here. Churches, with a few sensitive exceptions, seemed at best to be cold and at worst hostile. In the late forties and through the fifties, if the first generation of West Indians, who considered themselves fellow-Christians, had found in the Church a spiritual home, the story might have been different. As it was, they found a poor welcome in the traditional churches and soon there began that remarkable phenomenon – the rise of the 'Black Churches'. In simplicity and fervour reflecting something of the early Church, giving to their members the warmth, comfort and succour so badly needed, they stand in judgement on the life of our white churches. Because British churches could not welcome these new members and adjust to allow their full participation, they themselves are now the losers.

The schools, conveyors of British culture, despite herculean efforts on the part of some individuals, have not seriously tackled the task that faces them. The country is rapidly acquiring a two-tier state school system – with inner city multi-racial schools becoming second-class schooling for those who can't escape. All suffer and blacks are blamed. Yet in many ways black children simply expose existing faults in the education system. For those who are in a position to take advantage of it, the flexibility and variety of this system is a blessing. But for less privileged people, such flexibility means a more flexible kind of adversary, a system against which you can never win.

Even the social services, the agencies which are aimed specially at serving the less fortunate members of society, have been sadly unsuccessful in their attempts to win the confidence of black people. To our observation, many black people dislike and resent social workers even more than they do the police. They can at least feel that they are in the same world as the police, even if as enemies. They understand the kind of power that the police exercise and the kind of procedures that the police use. But social workers seem much more baffling, their aims obscure, their language specialised and odd, their attitude analytical and cool. Black social workers, in particular, have been steered into a position of extreme tension and isolation, co-opted into serving the white man's institutions and put at a distance from their own cultural group. And some black people seem con-

vinced that the only white social workers they will get are newly qualified, in-experienced, short-term workers who will move to more attractive areas as soon as there is an opportunity.

To these black people, Church, School, Police and Social Services are seen to have linked arms against their entry into the benefits of white society. We realise that to many white people this will be an incomprehensible statement. Those who inherit the benefits of British Society can perhaps look at its institutions with pride and satisfaction; their experience tells them that these institutions work to their advantage, and they may find it difficult to see that certain mechanisms within these institutions exclude people who do not fit the patterns laid down by the more privileged. Yet, on examination, we have come to see that the norms, expectations and methods of operation of these institutions have the effect of maintaining a colour bar. They contribute to a kind of conspiracy which is largely unconscious. The cumulative result *is* discriminatory.

The influence of ideas

These features of British society depend on a vast range of ideas and assump-tions. These include myths and culture, and even aspects of theology, which have contributed to a belief that what is the norm for a middle-class white Christian is a universal model for all mankind. Thus there is, in certain parts of the country, a strongly expressed belief that when 'they', the Blacks, speak and live like 'us', all will be well. In these areas Pakistani Moslems are especially disliked because they are so obviously different. Much of what is claimed as a Christian understanding has been a kind of local tribalism shaped by time and place, albeit drawing on resources in the Christian gospel. Black people today challenge British Christians to separate out what is culturally relative from what is eternally true.

In the imagination of many British people, the standard picture of the 'normal human' excludes many members of the human community; it identifies them in various ways as abnormal and exceptional; those who are in a position to make definitions define these other people in terms of their difference from the 'normal' human being. It is a common assumption, for instance, that humanity is divided into people and females: this sort of idea is very widespread; indeed some of us were quite encouraged to hear a very radical black man admit that when the women in his community really got going the black men would start to talk like white liberals! The 'normal' human being in Britain is an English man, middle-class, and Christian. On our Working Party we had two Scots, one Irishman and a Welshman. These members were continually trying to demonstrate that, while recognising the features that are unique to the black situation, *their* communities had much experience that was similar. They too had been on the outside looking in. They too could be admitted to the mainstream of society only by adopting its language and attitudes. They too had been forced to live on the margins.

The reaction to the black presence in Britain exposes a feature of this country which is illuminated by Welsh and Scottish nationalism, viz a reluctance to acknowledge that there can be several nations within one state. History, lan-guage, and values have been taught as if only those of a metropolitan 'King's

English' culture are acceptable and normal for people who live in the area controlled from Westminster. Many black people are rejecting the attractions of assimilation; they are also aware that conventional political structures may not be adequate to the task of operating a multi-national state.

The excluding effect of metropolitan English culture and economy has been felt within England itself, as well as in the other nations of the United Kingdom. Millions of English people of middle-age and over remember the days of their own rejectedness. The unemployed of the 30's were made to feel that they were a drain on society rather than an asset: they did not deserve a place; they had to exist on the margins and be treated as second-rate people. Further, they were identifiable because they did not speak the King's English. To be working-class meant, and still to some extent means, to belong to a nation that is not the real nation. In England particularly, rich and poor, scholar and peasant do not share a common culture to the extent that they do in parts of the other nations of the British Isles. It is perhaps this kind of barrier-system within English society, rather than straight poverty, that immigrants have found most frustrating. They did not come to this country just to be the bottom of the heap: they feel that this was not the purpose for which they were invited, nor for which their parents were invited: and, in the countries from which they came, there is not the same kind of subtlety and deviousness in the system which puts people at the bottom of the heap. As disadvantaged people in Britain, black immigrants seem to have discovered very little solidarity with the disadvantaged people of British ancestry. Among white people, they seem to detect only middle-class values and middle-class identity: these they see as the enemy, and they do not recognise a working-class community as an ally. They do not see the working-class as a group engaged in a struggle against oppression; they see it as a group which has assimilated to a system which demands that there be someone at the bottom of the heap – and that is where the black people find themselves. Therefore they have little confidence in the traditional centralised Labour movement; that movement may be democratic in the sense of standing for the right of the majority, but the majority are not the most disadvantaged. At this point, they are in an unperceived alliance with the members of various nations within Britain who are disenchanted with the current political options and who seek a political ideal which is more relevant to disadvantaged minorities. This is a development in the understanding of democracy which is urgent and essential if we are to be a just society. Black people have made the problems more identifiable within Britain, but even without them the standard understanding of democracy has become inadequate. **Perhaps the sharpest question which has come to us in our investigation is this: is it possible for a British type of society to exist except as a heap with a group of people at the bottom? Is it possible to be so interested in success, without a group of failures who can make success credible?[1]**

If Britain is an oppressive and excluding society, then just as this shuts some out it shuts others in. One of the conclusions forced upon us about ourselves is

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[1] For a detailed study of the relationship between the black communities and the white working-class communities, see Section 3b of Gus John's supplementary essay.

that all of us, and all our fellow-countrymen, are in some way deprived. Because the British are caught by their own past into defending an increasingly suspect inheritance of economic and cultural 'superiority' and privilege, they are not fully open to the truth about themselves. This in turn shuts them off from their own future and the wealth that others bring.

Our Hopes

Here we must testify to the hope that we have gained from our experience as a working party. Assimilation has been rejected as a solution both in this country and in the general struggle against apartheid. Assimilation is a solution which is attractive to those who benefit from the existing conditions: it promises the rewards of peace without the demands of change. From the point of view of the more powerful sectors of British society, it has worked well in the past. It is also attractive to people who have a strong fear of tribalism – a fear which many British people derive from their interpretation of the Irish conflict. Anything which stresses the needs of a particular group, even an urgently needy group, can be condemned as 'divisive'. Christian people, under the influence of the ideals of the ecumenical movement (which has itself been limited almost entirely to the large, powerful churches of mainstream British culture) may feel especially reluctant to acknowledge the claims of unassimilated minorities. But these claims seem to us to offer more hope than any dreams of assimilation. In them, there may be opportunities for a great new wealth of variety and vigorous diversity within one overall framework. In order for a group to make its contribution to such variety, it needs a phase of sharpening its identity and of discovering its points of leverage in relationship to the rest of society. And this means that there need to be areas and institutions (including, in all probability, churches) where each group really feels that it is a majority, that it really belongs. Those members of the group who do not happen to live in these areas or participate in these institutions, may still feel themselves identified with and supported by those members who can do so. Such areas may perhaps be derided and despised by some people as ghettos – but the use of that term often tells much about the speaker and the speaker's view of the social status of those who live in the 'ghetto'. (Do they refer to Brighton or Edinburgh as ghettos?) The way to avoid the evils represented by the term ghetto is not to spread the poor and disadvantaged evenly all over the country but to overcome the poverty and alienation of those groups which are most vulnerable and most likely to be at the bottom of the heap. Further, the terms and characteristics and boundaries of people's identity must be determined by those people themselves. People are not free if there is a more powerful group of people who insist on defining them and keeping them contained within that definition. But, with these provisos, we have great hope for what the black communities can contribute to a richer and more inclusive British life, when these communities have the freedom really to take responsibility for themselves.

The black presence can offer a new awareness, out of its own rich understanding of man in society: it can bring insights and values that have long been eroded in the West.

Those who have spent time in Africa and Asia bear witness to the richness of these cultures which affirm the wholeness of life, and man's interdependence with other men and with nature. Many of the insights of the new science of ecology are still present in the cultures from which new British citizens have come. As fast as medical researchers find the answers to incurable diseases, the new 'killers' such as coronaries, alcoholism and stress leading to suicide, demonstrate the incompleteness of western technical skill. Africa with its wisdom about personal causation in sickness has much to teach us here.

The demonstration of family solidarity by traditional Asian groups, their care of their own sick and old, are opportunities for British people to look afresh at their treatment of their own old people.

Britain has much to gain from its African members in their handling of death and in their support of the bereaved. Most Britons do not believe that they are in any effective community with their dead; and, ironically, this can have the effect of making them more static and rigid in the way they see the heritage and tradition of the past. This lack of faith in any real relationship with the dead is a feature very sharply noted by some African visitors.

Black people may be in a particularly strong position to help Britain to evaluate industrialisation and technology. Although they are poor, the countries from which black immigrants come have not previously seen the full cost of industrialisation in terms of human misery. Immigrants have been attracted to this country as the source of the desirable consumer goods produced by the British kind of society: only when they have arrived here do they discover some of the penalties of being that kind of producer: and this accounts for some of their protest and revulsion.

These are a few of the contributions which we believe can be made by the black communities, if they are enabled to find a responsible place in society from which to offer such contributions in neighbourliness and in equality of human status. Just as the youth of the African and Asian worlds have been looking to the West for ideas concerning the control of the environment and the resources of nature, so the youth of the West have been looking to Africa and Asia for ideas about what it basically means to be a human being. This country has an opportunity for its national character to grow and be renewed on a scale such as it has not known for many centuries. **This opportunity impels us to repeat one of our basic opening questions: 'What sort of Britain do we want?' Is it to stay as it is, or go backwards, as a society which pushes people onto the margins, and condemns them to remain at the bottom of a heap? Or can Britain take the opportunity to accept a further phase of change?**

Processes of Change

In this country, people have cherished a belief that they can settle differences and correct iniquities by patient negotiation. Reasonable men can be expected to behave decently towards each other; English institutions can be trusted to produce fair situations and to accept necessary adaptation. This is the liberal tradition. It has great achievements. For those who have been in a position to play the game according to the rules, it has worked well, but this success has

26

masked another face of society, which is illiberal and degrading to the poor, the marginal and to the unprivileged alien. The experience of black people is helping to remove this mask. Perhaps we can summarise by suggesting that this tradition is better at making gifts than at acknowledging claims. In the phase of history which is coming, there will probably be more and more *claiming*, by black people among others. This will inevitably be more dislocating, distasteful, and untidy. It may perhaps be violent and destructive – although this will be on a small scale compared with the violence which we have exported and in which Britons have engaged on other people's territories in the last couple of centuries. It will certainly be morally confusing – it will not be easily possible to allocate blame and identify one side with St. George and the other side with the Dragon. But if this increasing variety and diversity are to be healthy and constructive, we repeat that they need to make their contribution within some sort of total framework. Mere disintegration for its own sake will solve no problems. The social framework of the past achieved its stability in part by suppressing, excluding or assimilating various groups. Can Britain move towards a new and more just total framework, one which will retain those elements in the inherited structure which genuinely represent an ideal of justice (e.g. the ideal of equality before the law), while at the same time genuinely representing the type of diversity for which we hope? This task will need all the vigour and imagination which can be brought to it, by people of every sector of the population and nothing could be more urgent for the total well-being of the whole community. We must not sacrifice those values of fundamental human respect which are embodied in the Christian tradition, either by embracing a totalitarian ideology or by adopting unscrupulous methods to achieve these ends. As the English establishment smarts under the humiliating realisation of its incompetence, the temptations increase to seek scapegoats, to fall back on prejudice, to cut corners or to impose authoritarian solutions. These pressures must be resisted. The way forward may in many respects be forced upon the people of this country. But they do have some choice; they can welcome change or resist it; they can co-operate with it as a friend or oppose it as an enemy.

The Responsibility of the Churches

In our working party we spent a considerable amount of time thinking about the responsibility of the churches. This was partly for structural reasons: we had been brought together by BCC, and some of us have close connections with the Community & Race Relations Unit and its work. But there were more personal reasons as well. Coming as we do from many different nations, we know that when we concentrate on questions of national identity we can become trapped in mud-slinging, scapegoating, stereotyping and in other paranoid attitudes; against this, our conventional courtesies and even deep personal regard for each other are fairly ineffective. But when we consider the Church and its witness we are on more common ground. We are no less critical, and we are not necessarily

less divided in opinion; but we all recognise that the church's vocation is *our* vocation and its failure is *our* failure. (*Here again, reluctantly and for the sake of clarity, we refer to the churches as 'they' and 'them' rather than as 'we' and 'us'. But this does not mean that we wish to dissociate from our responsibility. We are very conscious that we are part of what we criticise.*)

In the past, the churches have been sources of inspiration and of power for social reform. But the churches have also contributed to the conditions from which people need to be liberated. They have become trapped into being a device for congratulating the powerful on being powerful. Long before the latest large-scale black immigration, the churches connived at a system in which some people have been relegated to the margins of society and deprived of a voice. More recently, they have become preoccupied with questions of their own survival, and this means that they have a strong inclination to hope for the survival of society's present order and structure. In spite of their claim to be international, a claim which has been repeated with growing emphasis at the top institutional level during this century, the churches have scarcely at all reflected the increasingly international/multinational/transnational character of the British population.

The churches' failures, however, have not caused all underprivileged people to abandon their traditional expectation, that the Church should stand for their interests and be concerned for their needs. Perhaps very few other poor people in Britain have such an expectation, but to our observations many poor black people do. They believe that the Church has, in principle, a unique combination of conscience and power. They know that the Church has mandates from its Lord to care about the afflicted and to participate in their conditions: they also know that the Church has its representatives in administration, in voluntary bodies, in education, and in bodies which have money to distribute. Their complaints about the Church testify to their legitimate expectations.

But the Church, when it is most true to its foundation, is not a powerful body giving of its wealth to the powerless – with all the dangers of 'strings' of keeping them in their place, of maintaining their dependence. The Church, (in its foundation documents) is most characteristically the poor and powerless themselves discovering what it means to die with Christ and to be raised with Christ, and therefore to claim types of power, freedom, autonomy and humanness which differ fundamentally from the assumptions of the powerful. Those who constitute, serve and lead the institutions now known as 'churches' should not assume that they can 'deal with these people' (as if the black people were the 'problem' and the church authorities the 'solvers'). Rather, when the Church discovers itself among the poor and most disadvantaged, it will disclose many elements in the traditional gospel which have been ignored or misunderstood by the more powerful – conservative and radical alike. At the same time, the scriptures can come alive in a new way and speak with their ancient power to the poor and disadvantaged; this can bring deliverance from the divisiveness which has bedevilled spiritual movements and social structures alike, and people may be grasped again by the vision of human solidarity which is affirmed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Church's Message

The Church can help itself to discover its true self by taking new hold on its message. This is not just a matter of more discussion groups. It involves the whole spiritual activity of the Church, what kind of deity it contemplates and adores, what kind of hopes it expresses in its intercession and in its cry for divine mercy, what kind of sin and failure it confesses as it seeks liberation and absolution, and (perhaps most important) what kind of good news it gives thanks for and what kind of values it celebrates as it offers its worship. It is, for instance, dangerously easy for Christians' thanksgiving to be a thanksgiving that they are not as other men are, and to value the Christian tradition and even the events of the gospel because they give them blessings and advantages which most people do not have.

We do not wish to insist that there is only one starting point for this discovery. There are very many points in the Christian gospel which oppose characteristic features of the conventional way of life, and we want to encourage a diverse exploration, not to discourage it by offering a definitive formula. But, if only as an example of how this reflection can shake up our motivations, we suggest that Christians might start by considering the central meaning of the events by which they claim to have been saved. In our experience as members of this working party, we have found that this approach speaks to us. (*From this point on, we feel that we can no longer separate ourselves from our readers; we ourselves are merely a group of human beings searching for truth with other human beings. In our use of words like 'we', we now make bold to include* you, *the whole community whom we are addressing.*)

Christian faith does not claim that God has chosen some people for special favour, over against all other people: what it does claim is that God has chosen one person for the sake of all people. Our national and cultural and religious identities give us a hope of finding a way of being different and of being superior to other people – according to racial or ethical or intellectual or cultural standards. We hope for distinctness of this kind, because solidarity with the general run of mankind can be a solidarity only in alienation, lostness and despair: or, as St. Paul puts it more simply, 'In Adam all die'. But Christ comes not to separate off an elite group and to detach it away from the children of Adam. He comes to be the means of salvation for the whole human race. 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive' – and the second 'all' cannot be narrower in its intention than the first. In Christ, therefore, not only can we be in solidarity with the rest of mankind and still get salvation; we can be saved only in solidarity with the rest of mankind. This, we believe, is the effect of what Christ has historically done. It is the New Creation. We can affirm this truth, or deny it: we can conceal it, or reveal it. But we cannot create it, for it is already achieved in the work of Christ: and we cannot destroy it, for it is the central purpose of the eternal God. This truth, therefore, can be not merely the inspiration for almost reckless celebration and thanksgiving; it can be also the stimulus for all our striving, all our conflict with injustice and with the systems which split off group from group and which erect competitive degrees of status between members of the human race.

Year by year, Christians recall and celebrate the historical story of the man who not merely proclaimed this solidarity but lived accordingly, who accepted the status of having no status, who incurred the full weight of human rejection and was killed by the apparatus and weapons of counter-revolutionary violence. Christians are rightly urged to evangelise; if this extraordinary story makes sense to us, we must surely be interested in drawing other people's attention to it. But the most authentic commendation is when the Christian community insists on living according to the values and the style of Jesus, and is prepared to pay the same penalty. Christians have a specific, historical message, not just a generalised theory or ideal. If we merely tell this message, we inevitably increase the distance between ourselves and the people of other traditions to whom we speak. But if our way of living makes the message true in our specific, historical context, we live in true solidarity with our fellow human beings without compromising the integrity of the message or minimising its embarrassing specific-ness. We can meet our fellow human beings as sharers in a common search, and be willing to find both alliances and conflicts as we try to work for a more just and humane society.

We have already noted in this document that there are many stereotypes and prejudices that have to be questioned, and many myths. A society will not live long without myths. (By 'myth', we do not mean something *untrue*: we mean the representing of spiritual events in the form of a story of natural events. If the myth is 'true' it is because the spiritual event represented is 'true'. At the same time, a story of an event, whether it be historically true or false, can serve to propagate a spiritual lie.) Myths have great effects on people's minds, and influence our individual and collective attitudes and actions. Times of social upheaval often witness the birth of new myths, which struggle with the myths of previous generations. In our encounters as a working party, we have seen how deeply held and precious are many of the myths relating to our various ethnic origins and our tribal or national identities. It is perhaps in this area of myth that we need to look for answers to the vital question facing our society: What is the cement, the bond, the thing held in common which prevents a society from disintegrating? A new, plural society will generate new myths, and these will arise not primarily from individual artists and thinkers but from the corporate experience of groups. Indeed, one of the effects of the separation of the scholar from the peasant in metropolitan English culture is that it seems to have become a culture with a stagnant imagination. It is good at debunking, feels embarrassed by the continuing power of the ancient Christian symbols, and has made cynicism almost an establishment virtue. Perhaps the most alarming feature of the new black communities is that they so obviously have a vigorous, fertile and irrepressible imagination. If they cannot outwit or outplan the mainstream British community, they may well outsing and outdance them, and that may mean that they have ultimately more resources and more staying power. In such circumstances, the Church must claim again its role to be a consecrator and critic not only of the mind but also of the imagination. A theology which betrays intellectual integrity is rightly condemned, but so should be a theology which

fails to nerve the human spirit to meet and engage with the forces of cruelty and of spiritual lies.

From all this, it must be clear that we are not merely asking that the churches should step in to alleviate the hardships of black people. We are longing for the church to be true to itself, to its own real interests. As Gus John says towards the end of his supplementary paper:—

'A preoccupation with community relations and racial harmony is unjustified and misplaced unless it is seen as a natural outcome of the struggle for equality, liberation, human dignity and racial justice. The Church must choose to identify with and wage that struggle not in order that Blacks might be given a better deal, but on its own terms and out of an active self-interest. If the Church is happy about the society which black people experience in the manner described, then it has nothing to say to black people – or to Whites for that matter – and it deserves to be condemned with the oppressive system. If it is not, then it is imperative that it engages the values of society and works towards a re-ordering of society in accordance with the vision of social justice and the deliverance of the oppressed, which, as Church, it must have in Christ.'[1]

In all this, the Church is called to enable its members to act in confidence in the grace of God and in the victory of Christ risen from the dead. The Church is not primarily called to atone for the sins of the past, or to compensate for its mistakes, or to win approval from a new set of voters. If it acts from such motivation, it is bound to make a mess of things, because it will be primarily concerned with its own self-esteem. In no cheap way, it must act as a group of people whose sins are already forgiven and for whose failures atonement has already been made. It can be responsibly careless about its own self-esteem, because its security is one which unites it with the rest of mankind.

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[1] See also the whole of Gus John's Section 4.

Appendix 1: Some Possibilities for Action

This paper, as we have stressed, is not a formal report, and does not end with a series of definitive recommendations for action. One reason for this is that much of the most appropriate action would have to be local, and general recommendations would probably be unhelpful for specific areas.

But we hope very much that our document will result not merely in discussion of our ideas but in positive schemes of action. We want to hear of relevant stories of success and failure, and we would be glad to assist in the telling of these stories so that experience can be shared. We would welcome invitations from concerned groups, to discuss our document, to answer for our views, and to join in the wider process of responding to the issues to which we are trying to draw attention.

We know very well, in the experience of our working party, that we cannot discuss issues like these for long without being logically compelled to face the question, 'What must be done?' If this question is faced at all practically, the answers will probably appear to be absurdly inadequate, in the face of the vast scale of the general problems. But that is a risk which we feel that we must take, if we are to say anything at all about practical response. We would not be true to our experience if we did not give some account of our slight attempts in this direction. A further risk is that we may appear to be suggesting that the problems will be solved by 'us' doing lots of good works for 'them'. Quite apart from the paternalist implications, we believe, as we have said above (p. 28), that the most significant forms of change will probably be brought about by the poorer and most disadvantaged groups themselves. But also we believe (see p. 28) that the church does have certain forms of power, wealth, and independence, and that poor people reasonably expect the Church to use these advantages on their behalf. We hope that the Church, in one form or another – through its official structures, through powerful Christian agencies like the missionary societies, through informal groups responding to immediate situations – will form its own programme to combat racism in this country, and that it will discover theological and material resources for this enterprise. So we merely offer a few possibilities for action which occurred to us; there must be very many others, and we would be grateful for further suggestions.

1. Some of the necessary action is already being undertaken on behalf of the churches by the Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches. Frequently we found ourselves considering various elements within its programme of educational work and of supplying funds to projects, and this thinking is accordingly reflected in CRRU's own planning and statements.

2. We see many points at which vigilance is needed and at which protest may often be needed also, particularly on the part of those who can influence the

taking and the implementing of decisions. Instances would include immigration procedures, employment selection procedures, educational assessment procedures, housing allocation procedures. These and other points of intervention are the responsibility of those who are in a position to influence present structures – and such people are not confined to Whitehall and Westminster; they are members of PTA's, they elect local councillors, they argue in pubs, they are someone else's neighbours. To equip them, they could do with a detailed list of points where the present systems are felt by black people to be most oppressive, and at points where these systems give opportunities for intervention by black people or on their behalf. And the Church could well be a means for distributing such a resource.

3. We urge that the 'mainstream' Churches of Britain should do all that they can to express fellowship with those 'newly established churches' which British people, from the outside are apt to label as 'black pentecostal churches'. We are glad to know that the BCC's Division of Ecumenical Affairs is in touch with some pioneer efforts of this sort and urge them to make their findings widely known to the traditional churches. British 'mainstream' Christians should see these churches as colleagues, doing a job among immigrants, indeed within the working classes, which the mainstream churches, on the whole, have not succeeded in fulfilling. Without pauperising these churches, or making them dependent, they should act in accordance with the claim that a church building is the house of God – open to all who desire to worship him – and not the private property of a particular group. Obviously, there may be difficulties in practice; but the onus must lie on those who say that another group of Christians may not use 'our Church'. More important, however, than this matter of church buildings is that the rest of the Christian community should seek to learn with the newly established Churches and from them, in every possible kind of training programme. They (and particularly their pastors) should be included in all local ecumenical and evangelistic opportunities, and other Christian groups should humbly wait for their invitation to join in their fellowship. The intention must not be to co-opt them into the structures that have already been devised, nor to encourage them to be tranquillizers or to be agencies of social control. These churches should be supported for the same reason that any church should be supported, namely because any effective church will contribute to the search for the Kingdom of God and his justice, because it will encourage its members to claim their true humanity and renounce the status of victim, and because it will build up its members in courage and integrity. This is surely what Christians desire for the traditional churches, and they should desire the same for the churches of the new black communities also. It is part of loving one's neighbour as oneself.

4. Another method of supporting black people in their renouncing of a victim status and in their claiming of a fuller humanity, would be the setting up of a centre for Black Art. When the Church has been a true patron of the arts, it has not merely been generous to a few struggling individuals; it has encouraged the whole community's self-awareness and has actively participated in the community's development of symbols. The mainstream culture of Britain

may be unable to see beyond the highly individualistic role of the artist that has developed in the West in the last few centuries: but the church ought, in principle, to be more sensitive to the place which the artist can have in less individualistic cultures.[1]

5. The Church has, at great financial cost, retained a considerable presence in education. There have been occasions in the past when it has been a step or two ahead of the state; when it has used its independence to initiate enterprises for which the state lacked either resources or vision. On these occasions it has deliberately intervened in the educational structures in order to compensate for, not to confirm, existing educational privilege and imbalance. Is it still doing so? Or is it now so dependent on state funds that it has lost its initiative? Could the Church, for instance, offer the resources of one of its colleges of education to set up a pioneer scheme for conducting effective research into what is actually happening in the education of black children, and for training teachers for this particular area of education in much greater depth than is at present available? As we see it, there is an opportunity here for developing educational excellence, an opportunity which is wide open to be tackled by any institution which has the necessary independence.

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[1] See the last paragraph of Section 3c of Gus John's supplementary paper.

Appendix 2 : Notes on the setting up, membership and programme of the Working Party

The establishing of this working party went through the usual channels of the BCC from December 1973 to April 1974. In the first paper to CRRU Board on 7th December 1973 the aim of setting up such a working group was seen as that of looking at:

    a) what kind of a society is developing?

    b) what kind of a society do we want?

This was elaborated further in a paper to the Administrative Committee of the BCC on 18th January 1974 when the working party was asked to:

    a) examine and assess the changing phenomena of our society with particular relationship to immigration;

    b) attempt to discover the forces which are at work;

    c) articulate principles which are revealed;

    d) describe the objective for a new multiracial society in Britain – what sort of a society should we want?

It was made clear that these were only broad outlines and that the members of the working party itself should have the freedom to narrow this down to a programme which was compassable in the year allowed for their task.

Membership of the Working Party

In the discussions about the formation of the working party the membership was seen as critical. The suggestion was that it should be, to begin with, a small group of eight or so to which others might be co-opted later. It seemed important to have an ecumenical and multiracial component as well as some regional representation, but of prior importance were the following factors stated in the paper to the Administrative Committee:

> 'Those who are nominated should be able to give the necessary time over a period of a year, have had experience in community and race relations, be intellectually and emotionally honest and have a firm commitment to a Christian understanding of man in society.'

In order to collect names of possible members, a widespread consultation was held with both Churches and those involved in race relations, and some 24 names were put before the Administrative Committee on 26th February 1974. The nominations were discussed and additions and corrections made. In order to facilitate the setting up of the working party it was agreed that the final choice from those nominated should be left to the staff of CRRU in consultation with the General Secretary. The membership of the working party at the time of its first meeting on 21st May 1974 was as follows:

David Bleakley	Formerly, Minister of Community Relations in Stormont Parliament.
	Currently,[1] Northern Ireland Labour Party Convention member. Author.
David Bronnert	Formerly, Chaplain to North London Polytechnic. Currently, Vicar of St. John's Southall.
	Chairman of the Evangelical Race Relations Group.
John Davies	Formerly, Secretary for Chaplaincies in Higher Education, Board of Education, General Synod, Church of England.
	Currently, Chaplain to Keele University. Author.
Ann Dummett	Formerly, Community Relations Officer. Oxford. Member of Catholic Committee for Racial Justice. Author.
Andrew Hake	Social Development Officer. Borough of Thamesdown. Author.
Gus John	Director of Youth & Race in the Inner City Project, National Association of Youth Clubs. Author.
Max Magee	Formerly, Chaplain to Students Association of the University of Strathclyde.
Colin Morris	General Secretary, Methodist Church Overseas Division. Author.
Andrew Morton	Formerly Coordinating Warden of Halls of Residence, University of Glasgow.
	Currently, Secretary for Social Responsibility, BCC.
Gavton Shepherd	Senior Youth & Community Relations Officer, Community Relations Commission.
Theo Samuel	Community Relations Chaplain, Oxford Diocese.

Staff

Sebastian Charles	Secretary of Division of Community Affairs. Director of CRRU 1974-75.
Elliott Kendall	Director of CRRU, from 1975.
Gwen Cashmore	Education Secretary, CRRU.

Following the fourth meeting, in Brixton, another member was coopted:

Bob Nind	Vicar of St. Matthews, Brixton.

In addition there have been several changes. David Bleakley has kept in close touch with the work but has been unable to attend. Ann Dummett attended two meetings and then felt she should withdraw. This was an especial cause for regret as, apart from the secretary, she was the only woman. (In fact, three women were invited to be members, but all felt they could not spare the time.) As Colin Morris immediately became Chairman of CRRU he too withdrew but has kept in close touch through receiving papers and reports to CRRU staff and Board. David Bronnert changed his job and has maintained a looser connection with the working party in consequence.

All members of the Working Party served in their personal capacities.

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1 Currently refers to positions held in March 1976.

36

Finances
The costs of the working party have been met by the generosity of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

General progress of the Working Party
From the earliest days of the idea of such a working party, the plea was for flexibility and for broad terms of reference. It was agreed that the choice of chairman should be left to the group themselves and that there should be an open-ended approach as to the final product. Undoubtedly this loose structuring has been an important factor in the way the working party has developed.

Chairman – Gus John has been the chairman of the working party. As chairman, he has directed and pointed the group towards the area which was finally decided on as that which should be explored and which he was able, in a unique way, to open up to the white members of the working party.

From May 1974-April 1975 the Working Party concentrated on exposing itself to the West Indian experience of British society. In June 1975 a special meeting was arranged in Slough with Asian leaders to consider the Asian experience of British society and how this related to the findings so far.

In a two day residential meeting at Spode House in April 1975 the first shape of the present document began to emerge. This was written up into a first draft and submitted to CRRU Board on June 12th, 1975. After thorough discussion, CRRU Board made various suggestions and criticisms and recommended a period of time for consultation with church leaders on the document. By August a consultative document had been prepared and this was used in 4 consultations from October-December 1975. These were held in Sheffield, Birmingham, Hackney and with a group from the missionary societies.

As a result of these consultations John Davies agreed to undertake the work of completely re-writing the paper. He took into consideration not only the summaries from the tape recordings of the consultations but numerous individual written submissions which had been received. The revised document went before the Board of the Division of Community Affairs on January 31st 1976. Members of the working party were present and after a $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour discussion it was unanimously agreed to send it forward to the BCC Assembly with a comprehensive resolution.

John Davies, with some assistance from Gus John and Gwen Cashmore, worked on a final draft to incorporate points which had been made at the DCA Board and this was submitted to the Executive of the BCC on March 3rd, 1976. The Executive gave its approval for the document to go ahead to the Assembly at Bangor.

The Editorial Committee who have done the bulk of the work since April 1975 have been John Davies, Andrew Hake, Bob Nind and Gwen Cashmore. Andrew Morton has attended on occasions and has, been available for comment and criticism. During this period the chairman, Gus John has been kept closely in touch (as have other members of the Working Party) and has been present whenever possible.

Appendix 3 : Reference Material

(a) Statistical Data

This document has not set out to give detailed statistical evidence. The kind of data available can be illustrated by taking Point I on Page 18.

'I. Large numbers of potentially creative young people . . . being condemned to spend years in ESN schools.'

The following three paragraphs from the Select Committee Report on Education back up this statement:

141.   DES statistics showed that in Greater London 25 per cent of all children in ESN schools were immigrants, compared with a national average of 7 per cent. By far the majority were of West Indian origin. Figures for the rest of the country disclosed regional variations, but not such a striking disproportion.

144.   While all these statistics should . . . be treated with some reserve, they reveal that in some parts of Greater London, and in Greater London alone, the number of West Indian children in ESN schools is wholly disproportionate both to the numbers of other immigrant children in ESN schools and to the West Indian population.

145.   In oral evidence, DES witnesses said that the definition of educational subnormality took account of 'other factors besides innate limitations of the mind', but expressed anxiety that West Indian children were being sent to ESN schools because linguistic difficulties made them appear to have more deep-seated defects. Again, although there was no reliable research on the matter, it was probable that the special relationship between West Indian parents and children was a factor in ESN assessment. The problem was made even more complex by the fact that Asian children who could not speak English were given the benefit of the doubt in assessment, whereas West Indian children should, from the teacher's point of view, be able to understand and speak English.

(Report of Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, Education. Volume I. July 1973. P. 38)

For further data on education and other subjects such as unemployment, housing, crime, etc. the reader is referred to an excellent short summary in a new book published in March 1976 – *Ethnic Minorities in Society* – A Reference Guide. Price – 40p. This is a joint publication of the Community and Race Relations Unit of the BCC and the Runnymede Trust. It contains clear questions and answers with tables of figures and, in addition, gives a very full bibliography of other resources.

The following shorter bibliography is largely taken from that publication.

(b) Bibliography

1. *General Descriptive Material:*

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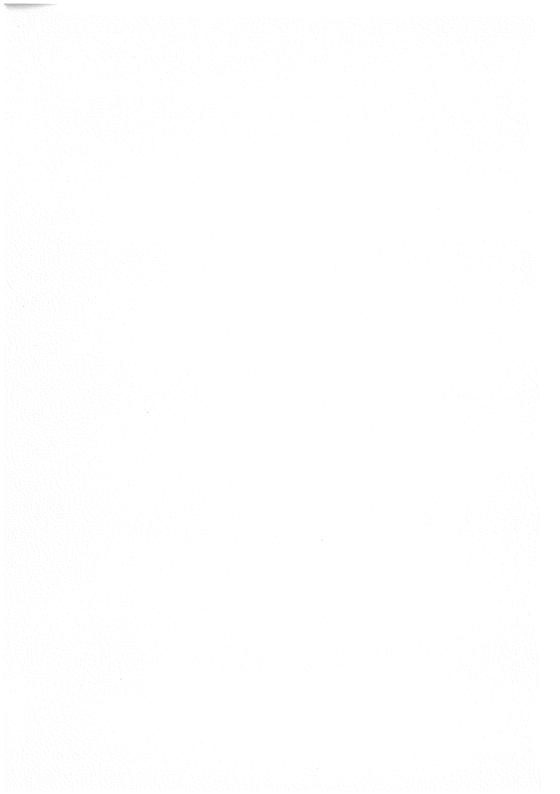Hill, Clifford, *Black Churches – West Indian and African Sects in Britain*, British Council of Churches (1971)
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The Community and Race Relations Unit of the BCC, 10 Eaton Gate, SW1W 9BT has available:
a   *A publications list* of booklets and other material suitable for Church groups
b   *A reading list* drawing on other sources and designed for different age groups and abilities
c   *A quarterly newsletter* on topical race relations issues – 50p per annum

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